

VZCZCXRO6684  
PP RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR  
DE RUEHRH #0451/01 0820613  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 230613Z MAR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0408  
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RIYADH 000451

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR NEA/ARP AND EEB  
PLEASE PASS TO USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [KIPR](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADORS MEETING WITH SAUDI MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND  
INDUSTRY ALIREZA

REF: SCHWEDT-BUNTIN 3/22 EMAILS  
SECSTATE 15433  
RIYADH 311  
RIYADH 226  
08 RIYADH 1676

11. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph six.

Key points

-----

-- (U) Minister of Commerce and Industry Alireza said he plans to be in the United States for a week beginning April 23, and he requested meetings with U.S. officials.

-- (SBU) The Minister committed to asking the King to allow independent third-party auditors to scan SAG computer networks for illegally installed software. Previously, only his ministry agreed to do so, and only in principle.

Comment

-----

12. (SBU) The U.S. has a long history of lending our expertise to Saudi Arabia on economic matters (such as JECOR, the Joint Economic Commission Office of Riyadh, from 1975 to 2000), and considering that the modernization of this country very much remains an important U.S. goal, we request that senior USG officials receive the Minister during his upcoming visit. Alireza clearly wants to increase the country's pace of economic reform, and we have an opportunity to help steer Saudi government economic policy in directions that benefit both our countries that we should not refuse. Certainly, as the only Arab member of the G-20, it is in the USG interest to cultivate Saudi interest in following our lead on economic issues.

13. (SBU) We plan to provide guidance to the Minister in consultation with USTR (ref A) on the proposed third-party audit of SAG computer systems that he can pass to the King. It is prudent to be skeptical that other ministries would agree to this easily; however, his commitment marks a real step forward for our efforts to ensure SAG computers are not using unlicensed software, and if the King were to issue an edict ordering this, that would give us much stronger leverage in our ongoing discussions with other ministries on this issue.

Progress on audit of SAG computers

-----

14. (SBU) Ambassador and DCM met Saudi Minister of Commerce and Industry Alireza March 21 to discuss how to follow up on the March 2-6 bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) council meeting, particularly the Commerce Ministry's commitment to allow a third-party auditor to determine how much software on its computers was licensed (versus installed illegally). The Minister said he

would go further than that and ask King Abdullah to issue an edict ordering all ministries to allow their systems to be audited. The DCM told the Minister that the Embassy would provide suggested language that could be used in an edict, which the Minister agreed to review.

#### Minister's travel to Washington

-----

15. (SBU) Alireza reiterated his interest in traveling to Washington in the near future. He told the Ambassador he planned to give a speech in Washington April 27, and he hoped to travel to the United States on April 23. He requested Embassy assistance arranging meetings with USG officials during that time frame, particularly senior officials in the Departments of State and Commerce, USTR, and the heads of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission. Alireza emphasized that he had been tasked by the King to improve the SAG consumer protection capabilities and to encourage the development of small businesses in the context of the country's industrialization (i.e., development) plan, and he said he both wanted and needed U.S. help.

#### Action request

-----

16. (U) Post understands most of the USG officials Alireza wants to meet have not been, or will just have been, confirmed; however, we request the Department consider his request favorably and creatively to help facilitate his meeting requests with senior USG officials. Even if the heads of agencies he wants to meet will be unavailable, there might be other options that we have not thought to suggest to

RIYADH 00000451 002 OF 002

the Minister.

FRAKER